

another and we will be on a course that will set us on perhaps a full-time Legislature, which I do not necessarily see in the immediate future. Perhaps it's down the road many, many years but I think we are more properly served with the present circumstances that we have and I would so, therefore, oppose putting this on the ballot.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Pedersen, followed by Senators Jensen, Vrtiska and Lynch.

SENATOR PEDERSEN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I am in support of the amendment or the advancement of this legislative resolution for the simple reason. I wanted to serve is the reason I ran for office and I am honored to serve, but if we look at it in the context of those who may want to serve also, there's a lot who can't because they can't afford to. Not necessarily this is not salary, it has benefits. In my own case, my wife presently has to work or I have no health insurance for our family. I couldn't serve if she did not work because there's no benefits with it. And I'm not complaining about that because we set that up before I ever ran for office. But it has to be set up. There's people out there who would like to run for office and can't. At this point, you have to be almost independently wealthy or retired to run, or else work two jobs, which a lot of people in here I know do. And I'm not saying we can't work two jobs. In the interim, I have no problem working two jobs. And, again, I don't want this taken as complaining, but this week when we don't have a recess day I will work the entire weekend to make a living and, yes, I did that knowingly when I ran for office and have no problems with doing it now. But I think we ought to open the door for more people to run for office so they don't have to do that. People said, how can you afford to run? You can't afford to run if you're making a big salary and have to cut to six months of your year to 12,000, and you're making anything over 24,000, you're losing money to run. Salary isn't just it, you can make that up in the interim, I can, to make a living, but I can't do the benefits. The benefits are something I think we need to take a look at and we need to send it to the voter and use this opportunity that I'm speaking now on the floor for those who may be watching their televisions at home, are listening to this debate, to educate them to tell them we have no benefits and you out there who may want to run for this office may have a chance to run if there was some benefits. So I think, for that in itself, I think we need to open the door to get more good people